Saskatchewan and Alberta Ink Agreement to Collaborate

On September 9, 2008, the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta signed a historic "Protocol of Understanding" agreement. The agreement will encourage both provinces to share their expertise and work more closely in a number of areas including health, energy, education, the environment, agriculture, economic development, and transportation. In the press conference announcing the protocol, Premier Brad Wall of Saskatchewan said that one potential area that Alberta and Saskatchewan could better collaborate on was cancer research and treatment: "[T]here's greater strength in a joint initiative, and we are going to pursue that." Both premiers believe that the protocol will help drive success in services and economic development.

The details of the agreement are, so far, general. A "Saskatchewan/Alberta Steering Committee" will be created. It will be co-chaired by each province's cabinet secretaries. They will be responsible for carrying out the intent of the protocol, as well as creating review and reporting mechanisms. The agreement will be reviewed annually and will be implemented for at least a 5-year period, barring termination by one province.

The initial areas of collaboration the provinces will prioritize include:

- Better services for citizens
    - Education
    - Post-Secondary Education
    - Health Care
    - Children's Services
    - Safe and Secure Communities
- Building more competitive economies
    - Energy
    - Environmental Sustainability
    - Transportation
    - Agriculture
    - Economic Development
    - Research, Innovation, and Technology Development
- Reduction of Trade Barriers
    - Delivering greater efficiency and value
    - Public-Private Partnerships for efficient delivery of infrastructure and services
    - Regulatory Harmonization.

Sources

"Alberta, Saskatchewan sign co-operation agreement" CBC News (September 9, 2008).
Government of Alberta, "New West gains steam as Alberta and Saskatchewan forge closer ties." Alberta Government Web page News release (September 9, 2008), http://alberta.ca/home/NewsFrame.cfm?ReleaseID=/acn/200809/2431247DC4493-ADE9-9E58-0DD27F6B1B26118D.html.
Government of Saskatchewan, "Protocol of Understanding" Office of the Premier (September 9, 2008).